

Finding Hiccup

by rewind73

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Summary: Stoick promised that he'd never let anything happen to his son. But one day, dragons take his Hiccup, leaving Stoick without a family and without a purpose. Stoick refuses to give up and is willing to travel to the ends of the world to rescue him. Story based on Finding Nemo, set in a HTTYD AU.

## 1. Chapter 1: Promise

\*\*Hello and welcome to my first fanfic. For my first story I wanted to tell an epic story that highlights the relationship between Stoick and Hiccup. I realized that the themes of How to Train Your Dragon were similar to the themes of another one of my favorite animated movies, Finding Nemo. Both are about overprotective fathers who have to learn to appreciate their sons for who they are. So, this story will use the basic story of Finding Nemo but it will be set in the world of HTTYD. Without further to do this is the first chapter. Any criticisms on my writing style or characterizations are welcome, hope you enjoy!. \*\*

Stoick slowly opened the door, careful not to make a noise. He tried to tiptoe quietly into the house, but every step made the floorboards creak. He cursed his large stature, the one time where it was a disadvantage.

"You're home," said a soft voice.

"Didn't want to wake you," he replied. He placed the bag he was carrying in the kitchen and made his way towards the living room. His wife was rocking in her chair, eyes closed and humming a lullaby. Stoick took a moment to look at her, sitting there so peacefully. Her long brown hair, delicate face, fair skin, all just as beautiful as the day they wed. And then she opened her brilliant green eyes and he was lost in her beauty.

"Wasn't sleeping. This little one was being restless all night," she

said, stroking her pregnant belly.

"Aye, he's going to be quite the troublemaker," said Stoick. He knelt besides her and gave her a long kiss on her forehead.

"How was the meeting," she asked, wrapping her hands around his arms.

"Same old business. Mildew was complaining about something or another. We all pretty much voted to move his home to the far side of the village, so nobody will have to deal with him. ""

Valka gave a slight chuckle. "Serves him right, always starting up trouble."

"The rest of the meeting was full of trivial matters. Oh, we're planning to build a new bridge across that river in the west. Should make herding the sheep to the feeding grounds far easier. And of course—" Stoick paused and but is lip, unsure whether to bring up the topic, "we discussed the dragon raids."

Valka winced. She always believed there was a way to bring peace with the dragons. She held her tongue, not wanting to start an argument, not tonight. She was far too tired.

"What is that delectable smell?" she asked, changing the subject.

Stoick smiled and retrieved the bag from the kitchen.

"Plum cake, fresh from the bakers milady," he said, breaking off a piece for her.

Valka smiled and eagerly took the piece. "Oh, thank you Stoick! I've been craving this all day."

"For you me dear," he replied, kneeling besides her, "Anything." He gave her a quick peck on the cheek.

"So, shall we discuss names?" she asked, still chewing her first bit of cake. "I was thinking Hiccup."

Stoick snickered. "Hiccup? Not the most manliest of names is it?"

Valka gave him a look. "Well mister, what do you have in mind?"

"I was thinking something strong, like Tornado or Skullcrusher."

Valka laughed. "I'd rather spend a week cleaning Mildew's toenails than name my boy Skullcrusher."

Stoick joined her laugh and put his hand on her stomach.

"Ah, we'll have time to decide. Though, I wonder," he started, "nah nevermind."

"What?" she asked.

"Forget it, it's stupid."

Valka gave him that look again. "Come now Stoick, speak up."

"It's just, what if he doesn't like me?"

Valka burst into laughter. "The great Stoick the vast, scared of a small child's opinion?

"See, I told you it was stupid," said Stoick, blushing.

"No, no, I'm sorry dear." She wrapped herself around his arms before he had a chance to stand up. "Of course he'll like you, what makes you think otherwise."

"I mean, I know I can be brash sometimes, and I'm a bit stubborn."

"A bit?" She was making that look again.

"Ok, more than a bit."

"Oh dear, you're worrying too much. What I see here is my warm cuddly papa bear, who wouldn't love that." She gave him a long kiss on the lips until she felt a kick. "Oooof, see, he already likes you."

Stoick couldn't help but smile. He leaned forward gently kissed her lips once more.

"Stoick! Er, got a minute?"

Stoick turned his attention to the one-armed, one-legged man standing at his doorway. "Oh hi Val, er, sorry to interrupt.

Valka smiled and gave him a friendly wave.

"This better be important Gobber," Stoick snapped. It had been a long day and he wanted nothing more than to spend the night with his wife.

"Dragons," Gobber replied. "A whole flock of them spotted south, coming right for us."

Stoick turned to his wife. "Sorry Val, I—"

Valka put her finger on his lips. "Go, I'll be here when you get back."

Stoick nodded. He grabbed his hammer from the closet and headed out.

Streams of fire filled the night sky as the dragons attacked.

"Protect the sheep!" Stoick yelled before swinging a hammer, fracturing a Gronckle's hind leg. "Watch the roofs!"

A deadly nadder jumped off of a nearby house and fired a series of spikes at him. Stoick dodged, and quickly grabbed the dragon's tail. With a mighty heave he slammed the dragon to the ground, where two other Vikings immediately pinned it down with their bodies.

He made his way to the catapult where he found Spitelout, his brother and second in command, barking orders at another group of men.

"What have we got?" Stoick asked, brushing off an ember on his shoulder.

"Mostly gronckles and deadly natters. Some zipplbacks, Mulch even said he saw a changeling.

"Ah well he always says that. Any night furies?"

"Thank Odin no."

"Great, let's hope luck is on our side. Load another boulder!"

The battle raged on throughout the night. Stoick felt a rush of excitement every time he swung his hammer. He took pleasure in every skull he smashed and every wing he shattered. He looked triumphantly at the pile of dragon bodies that lay in front of him. Things were going smoothly, he even believed they could save every sheep, until-

"NIGHT FURY, GET DOWN!"

A flash of blue shot from the sky and struck a catapult, sending debris everywhere. Stoick ran toward the burning tower. Luckily the men jumped out of the way right on time, but one less catapult meant a hole in their defenses.

"They found the sheep!" someone yelled.

Damn Stoick thought. Winter was approaching fast and they couldn't afford to lose much more food.

"Stoick!" he heard behind. It was Gobber, pointing at something. He turned his head in that direction and his eyes filled with horror. Three monstrous nightmares were burrowing their way into his house, setting it ablaze with their fire-covered bodies.

"Valka," Stoick whispered as he sprinted towards his home. His sense dulled, he was oblivious to his surroundings, the only thing on his mind to her. He didn't notice someone yell "NIGHTFURY GET DOWN!" He didn't notice the large boulder fly towards him. He didn't notice the blow to his head before everything turned to darkness.

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Stoick groaned as he awoke. The world around him was spinning until his eyes focused. I'm inside he thought, but where?

His eyes fixated on a tapestry hanging on the wall. He recognized that tapestry. Gothi's house. It was made out of brilliant red cloth and stitched with gold thread. It told the story of a man, one of the founders of Berk, and his conquest against the

dragons.

\_Dragons. There was raid.\_

Stoick tried to stand, but the pounding pain in his head forced him back on the bed.

"Stoick! You're awake!" he heard.

He turned his head to find Gobber hobbling towards his bed.

"How long was I out?" he asked, trying to tune out the ringing in his ears.

"About five days. You took a rock to the head, knocked you out cold."

Stoick tried clearing his mind. The pain was dying down now, slowly but surely.

"How many sheep did we lose?"

"Bout thirty I'd say."

Stoick groaned. We're cutting it close this winter. He tried to recall that night. He remembered running, running towards something burning.

His eyes suddenly grew wide with fear. "Valka," he whispered.

Gobber looked down. "Stoick, I'm sor-"

Stoick pushed his fiend out of the way and started limping towards the door. Gobber said something behind him, but he didn't hear it. The room was spinning again, but he kept tugging forward. He opened the door and saw her.

She was lying on a bed, her face pale and unmoving, her body covered with a white sheet. Stoick slowly made his way towards her. "Val?" he whispered. He got no reply. He felt tears form as he stroked her hair, hoping her eyes would open and he would be lost in a sea of green. He removed the sheet from her body and leaned forward to pick her up.

"Stoick, wait" said Gobber, but it was too late. Stoick gasped as he saw her back. It was burned to a char, filled with blisters. She was protecting the baby he thought. He then noticed the large scar on her abdomen. It was black and bruised, the stitches barely holding the skin together.

"When did she go?" Stoick asked, now cradling her in his arms.

"Two days ago. She said she knew her time was coming, and she wanted to save the child."

Tears were now flowing down Stoick's face. "Did you?"

"Aye. He's weak, cause, you know, he was early. But Val believed, no, believes he will make it."

Stoick looked back at his wife's face. She looked at peace. "What were her last words."

"They were to your son. She said she loved him and told him to never give up."

Stoick smiled, "That's my girl."

"Would you like to meet him?"

Stoick carefully put Valka back on the bed. He gave her one last kiss on the forehead before placing the sheet over her face. "Aye, let's go."

Gobber led his friend through the curtains into the next room. Gothi sat in the middle, rocking a baby cradle back and forth. The old healer's eyes met Stoick, and she nodded, gesturing him to come closer.

Stoick peered into the cradle and saw his little boy, struggling in his sleep. He was small, so small, but he'd make it, he was a fighter. His skin was a healthy pink, his eyelashes long, hair a distinct auburn, ten fingers and five toes. "His foot," whispered Stoick, turning to Gobber.

"Sorry Stoick, we couldn't save all of him. It was too far gone, he'll have to learn to live without."

Stoick looked back at his child. My poor, innocent son.

The boy fidgeted and started crying. It was not a loud cry; it was more of a whimper, like a wolf pup left out in the rain.

"There, there little one," Stoick whispered as he cradled the babe in his arms. "Daddy's got you." The boy stopped crying then opened his eyes, looking right at his father. They were a brilliant green. Just like his mother. Stoick stroked his son's hair and kissed one of his tiny hands.

"I promise, I won't let anything happen to you," he whispered.

"My little Hiccup."

## 2. Chapter 2: Growing Up

\*\*Thank you everyone for the positive reviews! \*\*

\*\*Now this next chapter doesn't really progress the story, like at all. But it does define some relationships and brings up some details that I may want to incorporate later in the story. These are essentially about Hiccup growing up on Berk. Hope you all enjoy, and I promise the next chapter will push the story forward. Again, please leave reviews! I appreciate any constructive criticism, or if you just want to say you liked it that'd be fine too!\*\*

Fishing:

"Dad! Get up! Get up!" said Hiccup, tugging on his father's

beard.

Stoick groaned. "The sun isn't even out Hiccup, go back to sleep."

"I can't sleep Dad!" the boy protested. "I'm too excited! Common, you promised!" He started bouncing up and down on the bed until Stoick finally sat up.

"Fine," Stoick said midway through a large yawn. "Go downstairs and get some breakfast. I'll be there in a few minutes."

The boy put on a huge grin and raced down the stairs.

Stoick sighed. He had promised they'd go on a fishing trip for Hiccup's fifth birthday and he's been regretting that decision for weeks. Hiccup was an accident magnet. When Hiccup was three he nearly lost a hand trying to clean an angry raccoon's teeth. According to him the raccoon had gingivitis; who knows where he learned that word. When he was four he nearly got trampled after crying "Dragon!" in the middle of a herd of yak. Stoick still didn't understand how the boy confused Lady Bertha's hairpiece for a dragon. So the idea of his son on a small boat surrounded by open water made Stoick shutter.

By the time they reached the dock the sun had just started to rise. Stoick loaded the supplies on the boat and turned to his son, only to find the boy flipping over rocks on the beach.

"What are you doing?" Stoick asked.

"Looking for trolls," Hiccup responded, as if it were a perfectly reasonable answer.

"There are no such thing as trolls Hiccup. Hurry up and get into the boat."

"Course there are!" Hiccup proclaimed. "Gobber said so! They steal your socks, but only the left one." Hiccup then looked down at his feet. "Oh, guess I don't have to worry then," he said, pointing to his metal prosthetic foot.

Stock sighed. This is going to be a long day.

Stoick stopped rowing about half a kilometer into sea. He pulled out a fishing rod and handed it to his son. Hiccup's hands shook under the weight of the rod, his tiny arms could barely keep it off the ground.

"Just lean it to the side," Stoick said as he pulled out a can of worms from his bag. "Ok, step one, hook the bait." He grabbed his hook and pierced it through the worm. "Now you try."

Hiccup grabbed his worm and, of course, the hook went right in his thumb.

Stoick rolled his eyes. "Let me see."

The boy apprehensively gave his hand and winced as Stoick pulled out the hook. A stream of blood oozed out the wound. Stoick fumbled around his bag until he found a bottle of alcohol. He poured some on

a rag and said, "This is going to sting a bit."

"No!" Hiccup replied, pulling back his had. "I think it's getting better, see?" The blood was now dripping onto the floor.

"Don't be ridiculous Hiccup. We have to disinfect it." Stoick grabbed the boy's hand and started to clean it.

"No stop! It hurts! Ouch! Arghh, the pain! The inconceivable pain!" Hiccup complained, flailing around his free hand.

"There!" Stoick yelled, pointing at the clean thumb.

Hiccup looked at his hand and shrugged. "That wasn't so bad."

Stoick rolled his eyes again and tied a small cloth around the boy's thumb. "Just cast out over there, and keep quiet. You don't want to spook the fish."

Hiccup nodded and threw out his line. Unfortunately the rod went with it. Stoick groaned. "Just take mine," he said, handing over his rod.

About an hour passed. \_Amazing, \_Stoick thought, \_this is the longest Hiccup has stayed still and quiet. \_He started to nod to sleep when he heard \_PLUNK \_in the water. He turned to Hiccup, but the boy was not in the boat. Stoick's eyes grew wide with fear. "Hiccup!" he yelled, but he got no answer. He looked off the side of a boat and saw a little body struggling to reach the surface of the water. Stoick dived. Underwater, e saw Huccup flailing his arms wildly, his prosthetic leg dragging him down deeper and deeper. Stoick wrapped his arms around his son and hoisted him back into the boat.

"What were you thinking?" yelled Stoick as he got out of the water.  
"You could have gotten yourself killed!"

Hiccup finished coughing up water. "I saw a fish!" he said, still breathing heavily. "I tried to catch it with my hands but I guess I lost balance."

Stocking slapped his forehead. "That's it, no more fishing."

"But Dad!"

"But nothing. We're going home."

The little boy crossed his arms and pouted as Stoick rowed back into the shore. Stoick sighed again. "Ok son, I'll tell you what. When we get back I'll get you any dessert you want. sounds fair?"

Hiccup's eyes beamed and his lips formed a big smile. "Plum cake?" he asked.

Stoick smiled, "Fine, plum cake it is."

## Work:

"Dad! Help!"

Stoick ran outside to find his son running around in circles, being chased by an angry chicken.

"What?" Stoick said. He couldn't even begin to comprehend the situation. He shooed away the chicken and grabbed his son by the collar. "Care to explain?"

"I was just trying a new idea!" Hiccup said, pointing to the chicken coup. "See? The chickens lay their eggs here, and the eggs drop down onto this ramp, and the ramp leads to this basket! That way we don't have to check the nests for eggs everyday, they'll be right here! Though I hadn't really considered how angry the chickens would getâ€|"

"I don't have time for his right now," Stoick said, rubbing his eyes. "I'm going to a town meeting, stay out of trouble while I'm gone."

"Can I go into the forest?" Hiccup asked.

"No," Stoick snapped. "Stay in the village. Who knows what's in those woods."

"Yes sir," Hiccup mumbled.

Hiccup waited for his dad to leave before leaving the house. It was a beautiful day but the village was mostly empty. The adults were probably at the meeting and the other kids were probably out playing in the forest. Hiccup sighed, trying to find ways to distract his boredom. He pulled out his notebook and started sketching a new invention. Sure his past creations failed horribly but Hiccup hoped his next idea will work, just so people would stop calling him useless. Hiccup wasn't paying attention to the path and, before he knew it, he slipped on a rock and fell flat on his face.

"Oooof, that's got to hurt," he heard a voice call. He looked up and saw Gobber snickering in his forge.

"Aren't you supposed to be at the meeting?" Hiccup asked as he got up.

"Nah, just a bunch of politics. Besides, I've got far too much on my plate, especially after last week's raid."

"Yeah, sorry about that." Hiccup looked down sheepishly. After all, it was his fault an entire rack of weapons fell off the cliff into the ocean.

Gobber gave a chuckle. "No worries lad. Could've happened to anyone. What about you, shouldn't you be out playing ball or something with kids your age."

"Nah," Hiccup replied. "That would be unfair considering I'm part metal."

"That's true. How is my handiwork by the way? Holding up well for you?"

"Yup," Hiccup lifted his prosthetic foot, "though I was thinking of getting some upgrades. Maybe attach a grappling hook or a crossbow on it."

Gobber laughed. "Say lad, why don't you come up here and help me, you know, if you want."

Hiccup's eyes grew wide. "That'd be awesome!"

"Great! Go ahead and grab an apron and we can get started."

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"Gobber!" Stoick yelled, his face red with fury.

"Now Stoick, it's not as bad as it looks," Gobber replied trying to calm down his friend.

"Not that bad! Look at his face!" Stoick pointed to a small burn on Hiccup's cheek.

"He's fine!" Gobber said. "Everyone gets a little burned their first time. He just got a little too close to the embers, that's all."

"I'm fine Dad, really," said Hiccup, rubbing his burnt cheek.

"Stop that, you'll make it worse," said Stoic, slapping Hiccup's hand away from his face. "Go wait outside."

Hiccup sulked as he left the forge, muttering complaints along the way.

"Common Stoick, be reasonable. You can't let the boy do nothing. He'll be bored to death!" said Gobber.

"He's only seven Gobber, and you know how he is. Being around all these sharp objects and fire, it's a recipe for disaster."

"It's safer than you think Stoick. I'll be here all the time to watch him, and we can start with basic things like mending jewelry."

Stoick let out a sigh. "I don't know."

"He really seems to have a knack for it," said Gobber, "and besides, it's safer for him to be here with me than to be out there in those woods with who knows what. Just give me two weeks, and if you change your mind just let me know."

Stoick let out another sigh. "Fine, two weeks. I want all his limbs intact. Well, all the ones that he still has."

"Yes sir," Gobber said. He saw Hiccup peering in through the window and gave him a thumbs-up.

Hiccup's face lit up. He couldn't remember the last time he had been his happy.

## Friendship:

Hiccup wandered the woods, hoping to find something to ease his boredom. Gobber had to go to the meeting today, probably to discuss the recent dragon raids. Since he wasn't allowed in the forge alone, Hiccup was left with nothing to do. Of course his father had forbid him from entering the forest, but Hiccup didn't listen. He was eight after all, not some small child.

He continued to walk around aimlessly until some noises caught his attention. He climbed a nearby boulder and saw a blond girl swinging her hatchet at some trees.

"Hi," he said, hoping to start a conversation.

"Hi," the girl replied, still swinging at the trees.

"You're Astrid right?" Hiccup asked, "Astrid Hofferson?"

"How do you know?" she asked while throwing her hatchet towards a nearby stump.

"Snotlout told me."

"You know that jerk?" she asked, pulling the hatchet out of the stump.

"Unfortunately. He is my cousin after all."

Astrid glanced at him, her eyes immediately going to the false foot.  
"You're the chief's son, aren't you?"

"That's me," he replied as he jumped down from the boulder, "some people call me stumpy, or hopper. But you can call me Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III." He reached out his hand.

Astrid smiled and shook his hand. "Nice to meet you Hiccup."

"So, mind telling me what these trees did to deserve such harsh punishment?"

Astrid looked back the stump and dug her hatchet into its wood. "I just do this when I'm upset. Stress reliever, you know?"

Hiccup nodded. "What's got you so upset?"

"It's stupid really." She sighed. "My dad said he wouldn't teach me how to fight. He says I need to learn how to act like a lady first so I can learn to take care of my future husband."

"You seem pretty good at fighting already, considering how well you swing that thing." He pointed to the weapon buried in the bark.

Astrid grabbed the hatchet and took a moment to look at it. "It isn't mine, it's my mother's."

"Ah," Hiccup replied, "so you stole it then."

"I did not steal it!" Astrid's face began to turn pink. "I was just borrowing it."

"Well, did you ask for permission."

Astrid looked at the ground. "No," she mumbled.

Hiccup shrugged. "Sounds like stealing to me."

Astrid's face was now red with anger. "I don't need you to lecture me about stealing!" She swung her hatchet again, carving another groove in the tree bark.

"Oh no, I'm sorry! I didn't mean to upset you." Hiccup sat down for a few minutes, scratching his chin as Astrid continued hacking away at the tree. "I got it!" he proclaimed.

"Got what?" she asked, turning towards him.

"A way to make you feel better! How bout you meet me right here in five days."

"Why would I do that?" she asked, turning away to continue her tree massacre.

"Common, trust me."

She looked at him again, this time staring right at his large, green eyes. They looked so innocent, so non-threatening. She sighed and said, "Fine."

Hiccup grinned. "So you'll be here?"

"Yes."

"Promise?" he held out his left pinky.

"Promise," she said as she wrapped her pinky around his.

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Astrid had been waiting in the same spot for the past hour. He better be here soon if he wants to live, she thought. She wished her mother hadn't confiscated the hatchet. At least then she could kill some time chopping down a few more trees.

Finally she saw the boy pulling a large yak behind him.

"Sorry I'm late. Buttercup over here was being extra stubborn." He pointed to the yak, which gave him a large snort in return.

"Buttercup?" she asked.

"Yeah, he's my dad's yak. I kinda named him when I was five." He looked down and started to blush.

Astrid giggled. "Does your dad know you took him."

"Nah, I'm just borrowing him." This time they both giggled.

"So, what is he doing here?" Astrid asked.

"Well, I needed someone to help me carry this over here." He grabbed a bag from the yak's back. He could barely lift it off the ground, but he managed to bring it to Astrid's feet. "Take a look."

Astrid lifted the bag effortlessly and opened it. She gasped as she pulled out a new axe. "It's beautiful!"

"Go on, try it out."

Astrid took a few swings at the tree in front of her. The axe fit perfectly in her hand, it was almost as if it was made for her and her alone. "Thank you Hiccup!"

She gave him a quick jab on the arm.

"Ow! What was that for!" he said, rubbing the spot where she punched him.

Astrid blushed. "I'm sorry, that's just how I show affection. It means I like you."

A huge grin grew on Hiccup's face. "Does that mean we're friends?"

Astrid couldn't help but join his smile. "Of course silly!"

Hiccup stuck out his left pinky. "Forever?"

Astrid wrapped her pinky around his.

"Forever."

### Perseverance:

"Hiccup!" Stoick yelled. He looked at the rubble around him. Three chicken coups were destroyed, an entire fence was in shambles and the shed roof had at least three holes in it. It was hard to believe such a small boy could cause so much destruction, but Hiccup always found a way.

Hiccup slowly crept out of the shed, his head hanging low in embarrassment. "Sorry Dad," he said guiltily. As the years passed Stoick has heard those words more and more often. Now that his son was eleven, Stoick heard them at least once a week.

Stoick took a minute to contain his anger. "How?" he finally asked, not really wanting to know the answer.

"I was testing out a new invention. Here, let me show you," Hiccup said, running back into the shed.

Stoick sighed and waited for the boy to pull out his latest creation. It looked like a barrel with random tubing coming out of every direction. "What is that?" Stoick immediately regretted asking.

"A water pump! That way we can put out fires easily during raids." Hiccup pulled out the largest tube and dunked it in a pool of water. "This end goes here, and then you just flip this switch—"

"Wait!" Stoick yelled, but it was too late. The contraption started flailing around, spraying water everywhere and smashing into a nearby gate. Stoick jumped on the machine, pinning it down.

Hiccup immediately ran over and flipped the switch to the off position. "Huh," he said, "I didn't think that would happen a second time."

"Hiccup! What did I tell you about your inventions!"

Hiccup looked up at his father's scowl. "I was only trying to help!" He turned his gaze to the ground and said, "I only want to be useful."

Stoick's face softened. He could never stay mad at Hiccup for long. After all, the boy meant well, he was just so different. "Go back in the house." Stoick said, "I'll clean this up."

Hiccup nodded and sulked all the way to his room. He lay on his bed, feeling the same disappointment he felt after every failed invention. He then turned to his side and noticed the plaque on his bedside table. It was one of the first things he made in the forge. In gold letters it read "Never Give Up." Hiccup smiled and whispered, "Thanks mom." He got up and pulled out his notebook. After flipping to an empty page he started designing his newest invention.

### 3. Chapter 3: Friendiversery

\*\*Thanks for all the reviews guys! I didn't expect to get this chapter out so soon, but when I started writing I just couldn't stop! In fact, I wanted to make this chapter more eventful but the whole HicAstrid thing took up more time than I expected. The next chapter will be more action packed, so look forward to that! \*\*

\*\* Kathryn Elwin: Thank you for the awesome advice! I agree that my past two chapters have been rather scarce on the details, but hopefully this one makes up for that!\*\*

\*\*Please continue to favorite and review, and again, I appreciate any advice! \*\*

Hiccup squinted as the morning sun crept into his room. He sat up and yawned, feeling his back crack as he stretched out his arms. His muscles were sore; he'd been working in the forge nonstop for the past week. There was a lot more work to do these days since the dragon raids had become more frequent. People needed weapons now more than ever, so he and Gobber were busy making piles of axes, swords and maces.

Still, Hiccup had some time to spare for his side projects. He had just put the finishing touches on his mutilator, a device that launched bolas and could hit a target hundreds of meters away. Sure there were still a few glitches, but at least it fired in the right direction now. And then there was his second, special project:

Astrid's gift.

Hiccup looked underneath his bed and pulled out a small wooden box. He traced his fingers along the carved floral pattern. His mom had made the box when she was a little girl. His father said said she spent an entire week in the woodshop making sure every carving was perfect. It was her favorite possession. Hiccup had never met his mother, but something about holding something she cherished made her feel close.

Hiccup opened the box and took a moment to appreciate all the treasures he had collected so far. There was the belt buckle made of bone that Gobber had given him. He fought and armada of frozen Vikings to get it, but Hiccup never believed his crazy stories. Then there was the pen his father had bought during an overseas trip. While the tip was made of charcoal, the rest of it was carved from oak, with a serpent-like dragon engraved in the wood. Apparently it fell in the ocean during a storm and his father searched for three days before finally finding it in the belly of a tuna. Again, that's what Gobber said so it wasn't from the most reliable source.

Hiccup carefully rummaged through the rest of his belongings until he pulled what he was looking for. It was a small pendant, about the size of an apricot. The silver was bent into petals that formed a flower around the small, black jewel in the middle. Hiccup spent two years saving up enough money to buy the materials, and another two months to forge it together. He held the pendant to the sun. The jewel glistened in the sunlight, forming a red sheen around the entire piece.

Hiccup smiled, hoping Astrid would like it. Today was the anniversary of the day he and Astrid first became friends: a friendiversery as they called it. Every year they would exchange gifts and spend the day together. He usually got Astrid a weapon of some sorts, but this year he wanted to do something different. After all, they were getting older, and although Astrid would never admit it, she was getting a little more girly. She cared more about her clothes, started wearing perfume, and he swore he saw her wear makeup once. She was still the same tough-as-nails Astrid he had grown up with, but something was just more feminine about her, and Hiccup didn't mind. And who knows, maybe she'll see him differently too, maybe even as more than a friend. Hiccup quickly pushed that thought out of his mind. She'd never want a walking fishbone like me, \_he thought.

Over the years Astrid started caring more about her reputation, and unfortunately for Hiccup, being friends with the village screw-up didn't help with that. She started avoiding him in public, and it got to a point where she would pretend he didn't even exist. She valued her pride as a Hofferson over everything else, and Hiccup understood. I don't mind, \_he would say to himself, but that was a lie. It hurt, of course it did, but he chose to ignore it. After all, it's not he didn't get to hang out with her on a daily basis. It just had to be in the woods, alone, where no one could see.

Hiccup shook his head and cleared his mind. Only happy thoughts today, \_he thought. He carefully placed the pendant in a small leather pouch and made his way out the door.

"Where do you think you're going?" asked Stoick, sitting at the

dining table finishing his breakfast.

"Oh, just to the forge. Gobber says we have a new shipment of axes that need repairing," Hiccup replied. His father didn't know about his daily treks into the forest, and he preferred to keep it that way. Gobber would cover for him like he did every year.

"Very well. Be back before dark, and pick up some food from the market while you're out."

"Yes sir," said Hiccup before bolting out the door.

"Late as usual," Astrid said as she saw Hiccup climbing up the hill.

"Did it ever occur to you that you're just always early?" Hiccup retorted with a smug smirk on his face.

"Haven't you learned by now? I'm always right," she said, smirking back at him.

"Oh I see. Need I remind you of the Snoggletog fiasco three years ago?"

Astrid's face turned pink. That was the day she tried out her signature drink: yaknog. The entire village had the stomach flu for a week. "I guess not all the time," she said.

Hiccup started laughing. Astrid, not happy with being teased, tackled him into a nearby tree, pinning his body to the bark.

"Ok, ok, you win!" he said, still laughing.

Astrid smiled, satisfied at her victory. She helped him back up and started brushing bark off of his shirt. She suddenly felt a sharp pain on her right index finger, forcing her to recoil her hand.

Hiccup's smile faded and he put on a look of concern. "You ok?" he asked.

Just like Hiccup to worry about the smallest things, Astrid thought as she sucked her finger. "Yeah just a splinter."

"Let me see," said Hiccup, reaching out his hand.

"It's fine Hiccup, it will probably just fall out on its own."

Hiccup shook his head. "It could get infected, and then you won't be able to swing your axe for at least a week with a swollen finger. Common, it'll only take a second."

He always knows the right words to convince me, Astrid thought as she apprehensively offered her hand.

Hiccup took a moment to study the injury. It was a sizable piece of

wood that was buried fairly deep in her skin. He reached into his bag and pulled out a flint and a needle. After making a small fire and heating the needle he said, "This is only going to hurt for a moment. You ready?"

Astrid nodded and winced as Hiccup carefully dug the needle into her finger. It hurt more than she anticipated, but she kept a composed face. Real warriors can't show any weakness, after all.

"See, that wasn't so bad," Hiccup said, giving her a huge smile. There was something about his smile that made Astrid feel, well, warm. Maybe it was the way he crinkled his nose, highlighting the freckles that covered his cheeks, or maybe it was the way his front teeth were too large, making the his face look goofy and innocent.

Hiccup gave her a weird look and she realized she'd been staring. "Soooo, what's the plan for today?" she asked, interrupting the awkward moment.

Hiccup smiled and reached into his fur coat. He pulled out his notebook and flipped to a list on the last page. "Shall we get started?" he asked.

They spent the rest of the day together, finishing every item on the list. They climbed trees in the morning, fished for their lunch at noon, went boating down the rapids after eating eating, and explored the caves underneath the Berkian hills at late afternoon.

They ended the day the same way they ended every friendiversery: by watching the sunset on top of the largest hill on Berk. They sat in silence as the sun kissed the ocean, making its daily journey to the ends of the world.

"What do you think is out there?" Hiccup finally asked, breaking the silence.

"Out where?" Astrid asked.

"You know, out there." Hiccup gestured to the horizon. "I've only ever known Berk, but there's so much more out there. What would it be like, exploring the world?" He looked down at his metal foot. "To be free?"

Astrid looked at him for a few minutes. His face was so serious, so determined. She finally shrugged and said, "everything I know and love is right here on Berk. I wouldn't want to give that up."

"Yeah," Hiccup replied and turned to her. He smiled and said, "same here I guess."

Astrid's blushed when her eyes met his. She quickly turned away her gaze and said, "it's getting late. We should probably head back."

Hiccup nodded and suddenly remembered the pouch in his pocket. "You're gift!"

"Oh yeah! Nearly forgot," Astrid replied. "Here, me first." She

reached in her bag and pulled out a small hammer. "I got it from Trader Johann. He said it was made by the finest blacksmith in a hundred leagues."

Hiccup smiled and held the hammer in his hands. The head was made out of steel, stronger than any steel he had seen on Berk. The handle was perfectly crafted and covered in a thin layer of gold. "I love it!" he said and gave her a smile.

Astrid smiled back. "Glad you like it."

Hiccup reached into his pocket and pulled out the little leather pouch. "I have something for you too," he said as he opened the pouch and lifted the pendant.

Astrid gasped. The silver petals were perfectly shaped, perfectly aligned around the black jewel in the center like a metallic flower. Hiccup held up the pendant in what little sunlight was left. Brilliant sparks of red sparkled around the jewel, like little dancing stars. Dragonstone, Astrid thought.

"May I?" asked Hiccup, unhooking the chain of the necklace. Astrid bowed her head, allowing him to carefully place it around her neck.

"It's beautiful," Astrid whispered, not knowing what else to say. She quickly gave Hiccup a punch on his arm.

"Ow!" he said. "You know, after seven years, you'd think I'd be used to that."

Astrid smiled and, out of impulse, gave him a peck on the cheek. They both blushed and avoided eye contact for a few minutes. "It's getting late," Astrid finally said, still blushing.

"Oh right, yeah, we should probably head back now," Hiccup replied, "thanks for the hammer by the way."

"Oh no problem, and thank you for the necklace."

"Oh right," Hiccup gave a nervous laugh, "the necklace."

"Wellâ€œ! See ya later!" Astrid grabbed her bag and dashed into the woods.

"Bye," Hiccup whispered, lightly touching the cheek where Astrid kissed him.

\_I kissed him. Really? Why would I do that? \_Astrid thought as she walked back to the village. She had never felt like this before. Her stomach felt like moths were fluttering around, trying to escape out her mouth. She closed her eyes, trying to clear her mind. But her thoughts kept coming back to him. She kept thinking about the way he exaggerated his arms when he talked, the way he'd twiddle his thumbs when he was nervous, the way he would look at her, with those big green eyes, like she was the most important person in the world.

I can't be- No!.. She couldn't be falling for him, not Hiccup. Not the town screw-up. Sure, he was her friend, her best friend, but she had always put her pride in front of everything else. Sure, he was the chief's son, but everyone saw him as a walking disaster. And if she went out with him, imagine how everyone would see her! She'd never be treated like a real Viking, like a real warrior. She knew this, but she still couldn't stop thinking about him, and every time she did, her heart would beat a little faster and she'd find herself with a smile on her face.

She held the pendant in her hand; it was the most beautiful thing she'd ever seen. He must have spent months working on, years even. So much time, so much effort, just for her.

Astrid groaned in frustration. She finally reached the village and saw the other teens hanging out in the village square. She shook her head to remove any trace of her feelings from her face before approaching them.

"I'm gonna kill more!" yelled Tuffnut,

"Yeah right, I bet you'll be eaten on day one!" Ruffnut yelled back. Her helmet was interlocked with her brother's as the two pushed each other back and forth.

"What're you two fighting about now?" Astrid asked, breaking the twins apart.

"Didn't you hear?" asked Fishlegs, clapping his hands excitedly. "We're starting dragon training next week!"

Astrid grinned. Dragon training! Finally a chance to show my skills!

Snotlout wrapped his hand around her shoulder and said, "don't worry babe, if you ever find yourself in danger you can always come to me." Astrid gave him a disgusted look before shoving him away. "She wants me," he said, unfazed.

"I'm gonna be the one to win," Tuffnut boasted, puffing out his chest. "You all can get a horn after I kill my first dragon."

"Pfffft," Ruffnut sneered, "watch, when they let out the first dragon, you'll be in the corner crying like a baby."

Tuffnut tackled his sister and the two rolled around on the ground wrestling for sometime.

Astrid rolled her eyes.

"So, where have you been?" Fishlegs asked Astrid.

"Yeah," said Ruffnut as she got up, dusting off the dirt from her clothes. "I haven't seen you all day."

"Oh you know, I've just been in the forest, training," Astrid replied.

"Nice necklace," said Fishlegs, pointing at the pendant.

"Bet you anything Hiccup gave it to her," Tuffnut chuckled, still sitting on the ground.

"W-What, no!" Astrid replied. She could feel herself blushing, "My mom gave it to me! Why would you think Hiccup gave it to me?"

"Well, it's pretty clear you like him," Fishlegs shrugged. "I mean, you both disappear into the forest at the same times. And you never insult or make fun of him."

"Bet they were making out in the woods," Tuffnut laughed.

Ruffnut shrugged, "personally I don't know what you see in that scrawny dweeb, but to all they're own."

Astrid could feel her anger boiling up.

"Please don't have too many babies with him," Snotlout teased. "We can't have too many screw-ups running around the village."

The other teens laughed, and Astrid's patience had run out. "We are NOT an item!" she blurted out. "We are NOT together nor will we EVER be! I WOULD NEVER BE WITH A USELESS LOSER LIKE HIM!" Astrid was breathing heavily after her rant. The other teens just looked at her in shock. Why are they so surprised, Astrid thought, it's not like they haven't said worse. —

She heard something fall to the ground behind her. She turned around and saw Hiccup, one arm carrying a bag of meats and another bag of spilled vegetables at his feet. His eyes were large and watery, full of hurt and betrayal. She wanted to say something, say she didn't mean it. But she just stared blankly as he picked up the vegetables and ran away, avoiding her gaze.

"Awkward," said Tuffnut, breaking the silence.

"Wow, I guess you really do hate him," Ruffnut added.

"I guess this means I've got a shot," said Snotlout, inching his way towards Astrid.

Astrid gave him a hard punch in the face before briskly walking back to her house, feeling guiltier than ever.

\_Stupid, stupid, stupid! \_Hiccup thought as he paced around his room. He wiped some tears that had been trickling down his face. \_Vikings don't cry, \_he reminded himself, but he couldn't help it. Hiccup had felt pain before: pain from breaking his arm when he was six, pain from disappointing his father on at least once a week, but this pain was nearly unbearable. He grabbed his chest, hoping his heart would start hurting.

Why do I feel like this? he thought. It wasn't like he expected Astrid to like him, or to ever be with him. But why did she kiss me? Maybe it was just out of pity. Or maybe it was just some cruel joke and she found pleasure in playing with his emotions. Or maybe their

entire friendship was a lie.

Hiccup groaned. He sat by his window, hoping something, anything, would distract him from his pain. He looked at the village. It was so calm, so peaceful. A few Vikings were finishing up their farming duties, while the fishermen were tallying today's catch. Hiccup looked up at the sky, staring at the glimmering stars shining brilliantly against the black background. He would give anything to be up there, to fly, to be free. \_

Then something caught his eye: a bright orange star becoming larger and larger. No, it wasn't a star; Hiccup's eyes widened when he realized it was a fireball, coming right for him. He quickly grabbed the box from under his bed, tucking it way safely under his arm as he ran out the room. He barely made it before the fireball slammed through the ceiling. Hiccup found a large blanket from his father's room and threw it over the fire, putting out most of the flames. He then looked up through the hole in his roof. The once serene sky was filled with wings and fire.

"Dragons," he whispered before heading down the stairs and running out the door.

#### 4. Chapter 4: Taken

\*\*Thank you all for the reviews! \*\*

\*\* aubreyabraham97- Oh, I didn't notice before I started. I read through your story and I think it's really good! Hopefully you don't think I'm stealing your idea. I'm planning to go a pretty different direction with the story.\*\*

\*\* Animal Lover: Hiccup is 15 right now. \*\*

\*\*Anyway, hopefully you guys like this chapter! It may take me a little while to get out the next one, and it'll probably be a bit shorter, but I'll try my best to get it out soon. \*\*

Stoick ran out of the meeting hall to see what the commotion was.

"Dragons! A whole flock of them!" someone yelled.

Great, just when I thought I could take the evening off. \_Stoick thought.

"Stoick," said Gobber, tapping his friend's shoulder. "Your house."

Stoick's eyes grew wide with fear as he saw the smoke escaping from his rooftop. Hiccup.

He ran, pushing a few Vikings along the way. "Hiccup!" he yelled as he barged into the house. He ran upstairs and saw the massive hole in the ceiling of Hiccup's room. Somebody had put out the flames. It must have been Hiccup, who else could it have been? Stoick relaxed for a moment before his worry crept back. If Hiccup isn't here, that must mean he's out there! \_

Stoick went the cupboard and pulled out his trusty hammer before running outside. The other Vikings already started putting up a defense. A group of men were trapping Gronckles in nets, holding their mouths closed so they couldn't fire. A female warrior was battling with a Deadly Natter. The dragon fired its spikes, but the woman dodged and dug her sword into the beast's neck.

Stoick saw Spitelout near the catapults and ran towards him.

"What's the status?" Stoick asked.

"We have the sheep stashed in a shed near the arena, and the yaks are hidden near the west gate," Spitelout replied.

"Good. What are we facing?"

"Gronckles, , Nightmares , Timberjacks, you name it. There's even a Snaptrapper attacking the east gate!"

"And Night Furies?"

"You ask me this every night Stoick. We haven't seen a Night Fury in fifteen years! They're probably extinct by now."

"Oh, they're out there," Stoick assured, "I just know it. Load the catapults."

Stoick fought his way to the central plaza, smashing a few Gronckle bones along the way. The thrill of killing dragons he once felt was long gone. Now he just wanted them all gone so that Berk can finally live in peace, and his son could finally be safe.

Just as Stoick was about to crush a Deadly Natter's skull, a large body tackled him, sending him tumbling down a hill. Stoick quickly got to his feet and stared down his opponent. It was a large dragon, larger than any he'd ever seen. Its four wings were stretched out, making it look even larger. Its owl-like head cocking side-to-side, searching for any weak points. Stoick stood his ground, waiting for an attack. From the corner of his eye, he saw two large fireballs heading towards him. Stoick ducked just in time and tossed his hammer at one of the assailants. The devil set a trap, he thought.

A Gronckle whined in pain as the hammer stuck its hind leg. Before Stoick could react, the large dragon charged. Three wings pinned his limbs; the claw on the fourth wing dug into his right shoulder. The dragon reeled its head back, ready to fire. Stoick freed his leg and kicked upward, striking the dragon in the jaw and forcing fire to erupt in the air. He delivered another kick to the dragon's chest, forcing it to back off. Stoick retrieved his hammer and charged at the dragon, swinging his weapon at full force. The dragon sidestepped, narrowly avoiding the blow. The hammer crashed on the ground, creating a small crater in the earth.

Stoick was breathing heavily. The wound on his shoulder and the exhaustion from the battle were taking their toll; he didn't know how long he could hold out. The dragon stared at him for a moment before letting out a low, grumbling roar. To Stoick's surprise, it then turned around and flew away. The dragons around it followed suit. Retreating? Why? \_

Then Stoick heard it: a familiar high-pitched noise coming from the sky. \_No. \_

"NIGHT FURY! GET DOWN!" A flash of blue erupted from the sky and a catapult burst into flames.

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"Good to see you lad, but aren't you supposed to be inside?" asked Gobber.

"You know me, can't keep all this raw Vikingness inside," said Hiccup as he entered the forged.

"Ah, of course. Well, I guess I can use your help. Grab your apron and get started on sharpening those axes over there."

"On it." Hiccup grabbed a large ax and started grinding it against the sharpening stone. He peered out the window, watching the Vikings battling the ferocious dragons, longing to be out there fighting with them. A fireball fell from the sky, striking a shed. The other teens were quickly on the scene, throwing buckets of water on the fire. Astrid turned to towards Hiccup's directions, prompting him to shift his gaze downwards.

"So, how's Astrid?" asked Gobber, surprising Hiccup and nearly causing him to fall out of his chair

"Erm, she's fine. Why do you ask?" Hiccup asked, trying to hide how uncomfortable he felt.

Gobber chuckled. "Common lad, I know about the pendant you've been making for her. How'd she like it?"

Hiccup blushed. "She liked it."

"Oh? Then what?"

"Then she kissed me." Hiccup could feel his cheeks grow even redder.

Gobber laughed. "Atta boy! I'll be sure to bring you something nice for your wedding day!"

Hiccup laughed nervously. "Yeah, don't think that's going to happen, considering how she called me a useless loser and that she'd never be with me."

"Ohâ€|" Gobber's smile faded. "Well you know, she might not of meant it."

"She seemed pretty sure."

Gobber took a minute to think. "You know, there are plenty of fish in the sea."

"Yeah, there are, what, two girls my age on Berk? One hates me and the other one thinks I'm a loser. Odds are I'll get a girlfriend in no time!"

Gobber sighed. "Listen Hiccup, love is complicated. I know your first love may seem like the most important thing right now, but you're still young. So what if this thing with Astrid doesn't work out? You'll find someone who likes you for you."

"You mean someone who wants a walking fishbone?"

Gobber shook his head. "I mean someone who will look past that, and see the kind, clever lad I've come to know over the years."

Hiccup put on small smile. "Thanks Gobber, that helps."

Gobber face looked puzzled. "Was that sarcastic? Cause you know I'm not good at catching that."

Hiccup shook his head. "I mean it. My Dad and I don't really talk about this type of stuff. It's nice to know you're here for me."

Gobber put on a huge grin. "Any time lad." He began whistling a merry tune as he got back to work.

Hiccup finished sharpening the last axe when a high pitch noise filled the room.

"Is that what I think it is?" said Gobber just as a flash of blue erupted from outside.

"Night Fury," Hiccup whispered.

"They need me out there," said Gobber, exchanging the hammer on his arm for an axe. "You stay. Right here."

Hiccup waited for Gobber to get out of sight before running to the back of the forge and unsheathing the Mutilator. This better work. He wheeled the contraption outside, carful to avoid the battle and attract any unwanted attention. He reached the seaside cliff and aimed the weapon at the sky. Common, give me something to shoot at. A high-pitched noise filled the sky, followed by an explosion as a plasma blast struck a catapult. He saw the vague outline of a dragon and fired. The dragon in roared pain before crashing into the forest bellow. I did it!

"I did it!" Hiccup yelled aloud. He, Hiccup the useless, had downed a Night Fury, the king of dragons. "Didn't anybody see that?" He turned around to find a Monstrous Nightmare staring him down. "Except you."

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"Hold them down!" Stoick yelled. A group of men were wrestling three Deadly Natters to the ground. Stoick grabbed a net and threw it on top of the dragons.

"They're retreating," said Spitelout, pointing to the mass of winged bodies in the sky. Many of the dragons carried off sheep and yak, only to drop them into the ocean once they flew over the cliff. "I don't understand, they don't even eat them!"

Stoick shook his head. "They're devils, there's no point in reasoning with them. What did we lose?"

"About forty sheep and thirty Yak. We're cutting it close."

Stoick sighed. "I'll go see if there are any stragglers." He walked towards the cliff side and saw a silhouette of a dragon running on a hill. It appeared to be chasing something, a small boy. Hiccup! Stoick ran, snatching a sword from a fellow Viking along the way. He saw the dragon fire, the boy barely finding cover behind a pillar. Before the dragon could unleash another burst, Stoick swung his sword, slicing a gash across its face. The dragon whined in pain before turning around and flying away.

Stoick turned to his son. "Sorry Dad," the boy said, his head hanging in shame. The pillar he was standing behind fell over, destroying a few buildings and allowing the netted Nadders to escape. Stoick grabbed his son by the collar and started dragging him across the village. The other villagers started to gather, but Stoick didn't care, he was far too angry to care.

"Dad, I know this looks bad, but you have to listen to me. I hit a Night Fury! I mean it this time! I-"

"Enough!" Stoick yelled. The boy went silent. "I told you to stay inside! And now, thanks to you, half the village needs rebuilding."

"It's not that bad Dad, just a few-"

"Not that bad! Hiccup, winter is coming, and I have an entire village to feed and we have barely enough to go around. Do you want the village to starve, is that your plan?"

"No, but I-"

"But here you are, making up stories about Night Furies! Do you not understand how serious this is?"

"I know it's ser-"

"But no! You can't listen; you're incapable of it! What were you thinking?"

"I just wanted to be a Vik-"

"A Viking?" Stoick was now yelling at the top of his lungs. He had enough of the boy's excuses. "Hiccup, you are NOT a Viking, nor will you EVER be one! You think you can do all these things but you CAN'T, you just CAN'T, so STOP!" Stoick was breathing heavily when he finished, his face flushed red with anger.

Hiccup's eyes darted to the ground. His father never yelled at him before, not like this, not in front of everyone. Useless, he's calling me useless. Hiccup curled his fingers into fists. He could feel his body shaking, fighting every urge to fall to his knees and cry. He felt angry, hurt, but mostly angry. "I hate you," he finally muttered.

Stoick's scowl faded. He felt the words stab into his heart like a

thousand daggers. His anger was gone, replaced by hurt and guilt. He didn't know what to say, so just continued blankly staring at his son.

"Erm, I'll take him home," said Gobber, leading the boy away from the crowd.

"Wow, I've never seen someone mess up that badly," said Snotlout with a smug smirk. He expected a sarcastic remark, but Hiccup stayed quiet. Snotlout's smile faded. "Hey, you know I was just—"

"Give him some space," Gobber interrupted. Snotlout nodded and took a step back.

Astrid watched as Gobber led Hiccup back to his home. She wanted to say something, but she stayed quiet. Coward, she thought to herself.

Gobber waited until they were at the door before speaking. "Listen, Hiccup, your dad can be difficult sometimes, but you have to know that he lo—"

"I'm just tired Gobber," Hiccup interrupted. "I'm just going to go to bed."

Gobber sighed. "Alright lad. Let me know if you need anything."

Hiccup nodded then slipped into the house. He made his way into his room and slumped on his bed. He tried to fall asleep, but his mind kept wandering back to all his past screw ups. Like the time he flooded the village trying to build that irrigation system, or the other time he nearly set his home on fire after trying to lure a Deadly Natter into his dragon trap during a raid. And every time his father would have that same disappointed scowl.

Hiccup sighed and turned to the plaque on his bedside. He read the words "Never Give Up." How could he if, no matter how hard he tried, nothing would get better. He sighed and lay on his back. "Maybe I should just go away," he muttered. Hmph, I've never even left Berk, where would I go?

He stared out the hole in the ceiling, looking at the starry night sky. It was serene, as if it weren't filled with fire and chaos less than an hour ago. If only I could be out there. Flying, free, like dragon.

Hiccup jolted up. "The Night Fury," he whispered. There was still a chance to fix everything. He grabbed the plaque and kissed it before running outside, determined to kill his first dragon.

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Ok, you can do this. Astrid stood in front of the door to Hiccup's house. Most of the fires in the village had already been put out, so the teens were free to sleep while the adults finished cleaning up the debris. Astrid couldn't sleep, however. She couldn't stop thinking about Hiccup; about how hurt he was and how she was responsible.

She finally built up enough courage to knock. After waiting a few moments for a response, Astrid slowly turned to knob and creaked the door open. "Hiccup?" she called softly. She got no response, so she made her way upstairs into his room. She hadn't been in his room, let alone in his house, in years, but everything was just like how she remembered it. The same small, wooden framed bed; the same desk covered with notebooks containing hundreds of sketches; the same beautiful wooden box that Hiccup only trusted Astrid to see. Save for the giant hole in the roof, everything felt familiar and safe, something she hadn't felt in past few years.

Astrid sighed. I have to apologize, tonight. But what would that change? Even if he did forgive her, would she suddenly be fine with hanging out with him in public? She still couldn't be with him. He was still the town screw-up, after all, and her pride as a Hofferson was the more important, right? And yet she wanted to be with him, more than anything. It didn't make any sense, but that's what she wanted.

Astrid punched the wall in frustration, creating a small fist-sized hole. Great, one more thing to apologize about. She shook her head. I have to find him, where could he be. Then she remembered. The Night Fury!

Hiccup was a lot of things, but a liar was not one of them. If he said he shot down a Night Fury, then he believed it, and he would be out in the forest looking for the dragon. That didn't narrow down much, however. He could be anywhere in the woods and there was no way Astrid could find them, unless- the hill! She could see the entire island from the large hill where they would watch the sunset together!

Before leaving Astrid pushed the desk, covering the hole she had created. Hopefully he doesn't notice she thought before running out the door.

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Hiccup stared at the downed dragon, his heart racing. I did it! I took down a Night Fury! This was his chance. If he killed the beast he would no longer be Hiccup the Useless; he would be Hiccup the Viking.

He slowly approached the dragon, clutching onto his small dagger. The Night Fury was smaller than he imagined, about the size of a small yak. Its body was pitch black, almost invisible in the night darkness.

Hiccup jumped back as the dragon let out a small growl. "You can do this," he muttered to himself, "I'm a Viking." He held up his dagger, ready to deliver the fatal blow. "I'm a Viking!"

Then he hesitated, looking into the dragon's large, green eyes. He expected to see eyes of a savage, murderous beast. But all he saw was fear. Hiccup tightened his grip on the dagger. Just do it! But he couldn't. He couldn't stop looking at the dragon's eyes. It was scared, terrified even. Just like him.

"I did this," Hiccup muttered as his arms slouched to his sides. He

looked at the dragon again. Its eyes were closed now, waiting for the boy to finish it. I can't leave it like this.

Hiccup started cutting the ropes. It went against everything Vikings stood for, but he didn't care. He wasn't a Viking anyway. He cut the last rope and the dragon leaped in the air, pinning the boy beneath its claw. Hiccup's was breathing heavily, his heart nearly pounding out of his chest. I'm going to die. But then he looked at the dragon's eyes. He saw anger, of course, but there was something else. The dragon was thinking.

Then the dragon released him and turned around. "W-wait!" Hiccup called as the dragon tried to fly, only to fall back to the ground.

From the trees, two dragons appeared, their bodies once blending perfectly to the foliage. They jumped on the Night Fury, digging their claws into the black dragon's back. The Night Fury roared and flailed, trying to fight off the smaller dragons. Then a Monstrous Nightmare burst from the tree canopy, slamming down on the black dragon. The Night Fury tried to struggle, but it couldn't push off the larger dragon. The Nightmare then looked at Hiccup, a visible gash running across the dragon's face. It's the same one from the raid.

Hiccup stared in shock. He wanted to run away, but he muscles refused to budge. Before he knew it, he felt claws dig into his shoulders and lift off the ground. He stared down, watching, as the treetops grew smaller. He panicked. "Dad!" he yelled, frantically flailing in legs. "Dad!" he yelled again, still getting no answer. No, don't panic. Not now.

He needed to find make the dragon let go. He looked around and noticed a rope hanging from the dragon's back. He swung his body towards it, barely grabbing the rope with his fingertips. He tried to hoist himself upwards when the rope snapped and something fell towards the ground. A bag? What was a dragon doing with a bag?

"Hey! My satchel! You're going to pay for that boy!" said harsh voice. Hiccup looked up. He saw the underside of a Monstrous Nightmare: a powerful dragon, but not one that is known to talk. His eyes grew wide when he noticed a man, dressed in black armor, riding the dragon! "Knock him out Firebreath!" the man yelled.

The dragon whipped his tail, striking the back of Hiccup's head. The boy felt himself drifting out of consciousness. "Dad," he muttered one more time before everything turned black.

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"That's the last of it," said Stoick, throwing a large piece of wood onto a cart. It had been a long night. At least six houses were destroyed and they had lost at least a third of their food supply. And, of course, there was Hiccup. The boy's words still stung. He hates me. Stoick shook his head to clear his mind.

He saw Gobber walking out of the forge and approached him.

"How are the repair plans going?" asked Stoick

"They're fine," Gobber replied. "We'll start by rebuilding the dock. A lot of the wood is shattered, but luckily none of the ships were damaged. Then we'll get to people's houses, and finally the catapult towers."

Stoick nodded. "That's good, um, keep up the good work."

Gobber smirked. "Ok, spit it out."

"W-what?"

"I told you about these plans no less than half an hour ago, which means there's something else you want to talk about. Hiccup, I'm guessing."

Stoick sighed. Gobber could read him like a book. "It's just, the boy never listens, and it's causing too many problems! And after his little outburst today, I don't know."

Gobber nodded. "Yes, he's always been a stubborn one, just like his father. But I think you're being too hard on him, especially today."

"What do you mean?"

"You didn't notice? Usually after you scold him he just roles his eyes, spits out a few sarcastic comments and starts thinking of his next crazy idea. But today, he was quiet. I could see it in his eyes. It was like a bit of his fire was put out."

Stoick nodded. He had seen it too; he just didn't want to admit it. "What should I do Gobber? He's just so different!"

"That's not necessarily a bad thing. You just have steer him in the right direction. Maybe even put him in dragon training, he may just surprise you."

Stoick gave him a look. "That's not an option. He'll be killed before you let the first dragon out."

Gobber shrugged, but decided not to push the subject. He knew Stoick's views when it came to his son's safety. "Just try talking to him, and actually listening for once."

Stoick grunted. Listen? He's my son; he should be listening to me. But in his gut he knew Gobber was right. "I suppose I'll give it a shot. Thanks Gobber."

"Anytime. And you should get that shoulder checked!"

Stoick suddenly remembered the wound on his right shoulder. It had stopped bleeding, but it certainly needed to be treated. "In the morning," he replied before heading back to work.

He helped herd the straggling sheep back to their pens and finished fixing the door to an old shed. Just as he was going to call it a night he saw Gobber hobbling towards him. "Stoick!" the one-armed one-legged man yelled, pointing out to the forest.

Stoick looked in that direction and gasped. Dragons were bursting

from the trees. Three were carrying a large black creature with them, and other was carrying a small boy. The boy was yelling something, it sounded like "Dad!"

Stoick recognized the voice. "Hiccup!" he yelled. He ran, faster than he had ever ran before, shoving everything and everyone out of his way. He burst into the forest, the blur of green around him as he trampled through the foliage. "Hiccup!" he yelled again.

"Dad!" The voice was louder now. He ran towards it, his mind racing, unable to make coherent thoughts. He heard a THUD as he crashed into a mountain, creating a large crack in the rock. It was a dead end.

"Hiccup!" he yelled, looking up into the sky, but he saw nothing. He felt tears forming in his eyes and the world around him started spinning. He's gone. Hiccup is gone.

End  
file.